

# Enhancing Students' Engagement in TBLT: The Implementation of Mind Mapping

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# Enhancing Students' Engagement in TBLT: The Implementation of Mind Mapping

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**Abstract**—Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been found effective to improve students' comprehension on language and communication skill. This study aimed at investigating whether (or not) mind mapping, as a part of learning technics, was potential to increase students' engagement in learning English in English as foreign language (EFL) class which implemented TBLT approach. Two groups of student with the same level of English ability (according to their English lecturer) who are majoring in Business Administration were involved as research participants. They were divided into two groups, one experiment group of 30 students and one control group 30 students. Both groups were given a 6-session English learning each. The experiment group was given TBLT approach with mind mapping technic and the control group was given English learning with conventional method and materials. The topic discussed was 'making business letter'. During learning session, students of experiment group were found more creative and stated that 'mind mapping technic' was effective to improve their comprehension of the topic and engagement being compared to control group. They were much helped with mind mapping as a role play activity.

**Keywords**—mind mapping, role play, engagement, TBLT, EFL

## I. INTRODUCTION

TBLT has been a warm discussion topic. It has been considered successful by some theorists, and on other hand unsuccessful by some other scholars. According to Sato [1], TBLT was found unsuccessful for teaching English in Japan. Effectiveness of a learning activity depends on how the learning can achieve its target or goal. As learning goal was set in order for students to master grammar, to be able to construct grammatical sentences, TBLT with communicative language teaching (CLT) was left. They even suggested conventional model of learning whose focus is on grammar points (conventional form-focused approach), such as grammar translation method (GTM), Presentation Practice Production (PPP), Test Teach Test (TTT).

In line with this, It is also found that TBLT was doubtful to contribute to a success in Jepang [1-4]. These research investigated that TBLT was not in accordance with the teaching of English as a foreign language where students did

not have needs on using language for communication. TBLT did not meet learning style of Japanese students. TBLT exposes students to activity of using language in communication, but Japanese students were focused on preparation for taking English test. A part from this, TBLT is also apposed to Confucius culture where lecturer or instructors always have far stronger authority than students. As TBLT only focuses on a structure or form which often results in a fossilization of language rather than acquisition of language. It does not have a model which emphasizes on language structure [1], [3-6].

A part from its weakness, TBLT was also found effective to support language acquisition [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], and [12]. Effectiveness of TBLT in English language teaching was undertaken by [7], [8], [9] which finally resulted in a notion that this model was proven to be able to response to failure of 'presentation practice production' (PPP). PPP was declared to fail to improve students' communicative skill and TBLT conversely could improve students' skill of using the language. It has been considered suitable to acquire second language and class-based research. Their investigation was successful to produce notion that: TBLT is supportive to the implementation of CLT, it is reaction to failure of presentation-practice- production model and test-teach-test model, and it serves target language (TL) as a means for communication better than as a learning object.

Effectiveness of TBLT was also evidenced by [9], [10], [11], and [12]. Samuda & Bygate [9] stated that 'task' is a holistic activity which involves language users to achieve non linguistic goal. It prioritizes a context where task becomes a center for learning to provide activities which uses English in class room, to guide teachers to design curriculum, and syllabus as well as to determine assessment model for learners. TBLT is considered to be very potential and holistic to design a learning model. This finding could attract much attention on English teachers, lecturers, theorists, and practitioners. Other view was shot by some theorists on TBLT found that it was successful to provide students with natural English, it is an alternative approach to solve English students in Japan, it could give input which contributed to real output, TBLT uses input-based task which helped students improve their communicative

competence, it provided students with meaningful language use, and TBL could be adjusted with situation and condition [9-12]. Research on TBLT in teaching English was also carried in integration with other models and for other purposes, such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, silabus designing, meaning-focus instruction, as well as teaching strategy. TBLT was very effective as students and activities are integrated in a meaningful communicative activities and oriented on a goal that it can help learners solve problem, finish projects, and make conclusion. Moreover, TBLT was found more effective if it was supported with analytic syllabus which focused on learners ability in doing task in target language without grammar lesson carried out explicitly with procedural syllabus [13]. This syllabus emphasized that forms or grammar can be learned through *focus on meaning* technic and *grammar construction* [14]. Thus, TBLT should be supportive to a condition where the learning should suit students' cognitive, be able to involve students, as well as fulfill their needs [7]. In addition, it should be able to make students 'notice', i.e. insert syntactic aspects, vocabulary, or phonological aspects and other into their mind [17].

Research on TBLT have been centralized on how grammar was taught, how communication was dominated, how one single form was introduced without paying attention on integrating it with other form in learning process, and how students were introduced with natural English. Those advantages and disadvantages of TBLT were not judged as its integration with other aspects. What if other aspect (i.e. mind mapping) is involved in TBLT. The learning is seen as a one-full-session activity. This research was trying to investigate how 'mind mapping' played a role in TBLT implementation. Specifically, it is aimed at investigating whether or not mind mapping was effective to enhance students' engagement.

## II. METHOD

The qualitative study tried to prove if mind mapping was effective to enhance students' engagement and comprehension of the topic. Engagement, behavioral intensity and emotional quality of a person's active involvement during a task, is very needed to enable students' successful learning. Students' involvement in learning is of much importance which can certainly guarantee their meaningful learning. However, many classes, for instance EFL classes ignored students' involvement in any task or learning activity. Comprehension refers to students' understanding of the topic learned. It is an aspect with which learners can be helped to interpret and understand what is being listened and read. Mind mapping is a technic where students were given a task to focus their attention on the topic prior to their producing an output.

Research participants were two groups of student majoring in Business Administration Department each of which consisted of thirty students. All students had same level of English ability based on their English lecturer's daily achievement report. The participants were divided into two groups, one experiment group and one control group. Both groups were given a three-session English learning each. The experiment group was given TBLT approach with

mind mapping technic and the control group was given English learning with conventional method and materials. The topic discussed was 'making business letter'.

Data of research were effectiveness of mind mapping implemented in EFL with task-based language teaching. Mind mapping consists of two parts, they are 'content' and 'language'. These two parts have been potential to enhance their engagement and comprehension of the topic. Prior to working out writing task of 'making business letter', students were given task to map their mind. Mapping 'content' functioned to enable students to draw in their mind what information they will contain in letter of business. Information is very important as it is the things what language is used to express. Aspect of 'language' is also supportive to achieve goal. Students were asked to think, to inventory, and to use what expressions, vocabulary, clauses, structures are used to write letter. Good letter of business is that contains enough content and appropriate language.

In learning process, students were given elicitation or lead-in activities with questioning technic. The activity was done for ten minutes to introduce topic. During this stage, students were given related questions both open and close questions. The questions were used attract students' attention to topic. Mind mapping was introduced after lead-in activity finished. Mind mapping was presented in 20 minutes. It provided students with chance to discuss with their friend or use their intuition about content and language needed when we want to write business letter. In its implementation, students were given two boxes containing content and language. The topic of mind mapping was 'making letter of enquiry to an agro-tourism company. Students had to inventory things tourist would see in an agro-tourism company, i.e. what information they would like to ask about and what form of sentences, noun phrases, clauses, words, or other linguistic properties needed. After the two types of data obtained, students were asked to formulate information and form questions or sentences used in writing inquiry letter, or interview. The next step is speaking activity in form of interview. Students were asked to perform an interview either directly or via phone to agro-tourism. Students spent 10 minutes to undertake interview activity. Students performed it in turn. They acted as client and owner or staff of an agro-tourism company. Interview activity seemed to be very effective and helpful for them.

Upon the learning, both group of students were tested. They were given a same test. The test was 'an interview with a travel agency'. A tourist was to interview a travel agency to get some information before he/she come to visit Bali. After the test, scores of both groups were compiled and compared to see their differences. Data of test result were analyzed qualitatively. Result of analysis was performed with formal method, i.e. in form of narration.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Effectiveness of Mind Mapping Technic

The tests were focused on communication skill which measures two main aspects of fluency and accuracy. Fluency covers three sub-sections of fluency, pronunciation,

and comprehension, and accuracy covers two main sub-aspects of grammar and complexity.

Beneath are test results of both groups. Control group gained total score of 605 and experiment group gained 710. The experiment groups' score was 17.35% higher than control group. Average of control group score was 121 and the experiment score average was 142. Both tables showed that 'fluency' was the easiest aspect and complexity was the most difficult aspect. In the case of control group, fluency was their easiest aspect (with score 135) and complexity was the hardest (with score 110). Comprehension seemed to be quite easier (with score 125) being compared to pronunciation (with score 120) and grammar (with score 125) as shown in Table I.

TABLE I. CONTROL GROUP SCORES

Fluency			Accuracy		Total
Fl	Pron	Comp	Gram	Compl	
135	120	125	115	110	605

Fl: fluency; Pron: pronunciation; Comp: comprehension; Gram: Grammar; Compl: complexity.

Experiment group members seemed to be more competent than control group members. Even though the increase was not very sharp, their scores were still higher. Their fluency was the highest (with score 170), comprehension was the second highest (with score 145), pronunciation was the third aspect (with score 140). Grammar and complexity were the hardest as shown in Table II.

TABLE II. EXPERIMENT GROUP SCORES

Fluency			Accuracy		Total
Fl	Pron	Comp	Gram	Compl	
170	140	145	130	125	710

Fl: fluency; Pron: pronunciation; Comp: comprehension; Gram: Grammar; Compl: complexity.

The slight difference between experiment group and control group (17.35%) might be resulted by duration or learning hour. A three-session meeting seemed to be a slightly limited learning time for the class. Even though, the instruction was initiated and affixed with lead in activity and task of mind mapping, three sessions are not considered enough for students to implement those technics as there was only one topic discussed. In order to make students aware and get effect from learning, there should be more intensive meetings offered to students with some different topics. By doing so, students will be more aware of and get used to it. Even though their final output is to be able to write letter of inquiry, 'lead in activity' and 'mind-mapping' as a task could empower students' communication skill and enable them to do verbal interaction using structures and expressions needed as they write letters of inquiry. Thus, TBLT was found to be very effective to improve students' skill in communication, by ignoring number of forms they are taught in the task. This is in line with successful of implementation of TBLT to improve learners' speaking skill [7-13].

### B. Students' Ideas Extension

Students' success in performing verbal interaction and writing letter of inquiry depended very much on how rich they were at ideas. Their flow of ideas were influenced with the condition. Mind mapping, particularly, was effective to extend students' ideas. Through doing task of searching, investigating, inventorying, and listing ideas on what content or information and language they might need when making letter of inquiry to an agro-tourism company, they were able to enrich their properties both language and topics being asked. Being rich of both properties seemed to be helpful for them to create letter of inquiry and perform interview. Mapping mind is a potential ethnic based on which students were able to train themselves to outline a dialog before performance. The main problem to cause them stuck in doing interview or dialog was idea shortage.

Filling in boxes of content or information and language expressions (mind mapping) was found useful for students even though they did this activity in a relatively short time. The activity led in an effort to make preparation prior to their producing questions of expressions. The combination of treasures of information or contents to ask and language expression used to ask made a good inventory in students' mind. This is a good asset for students to have to succeed in making verbal interaction or writing inquiry letters.

### C. Increasing Students' Engagement

Students' involvement in and during a task is very essential to determine whether or not they will succeed in the lesson. The more time they involve themselves, the better comprehension and learning outcome they will achieve. During lead-in activity and mind mapping, students were very active involving and taking parts in lesson. Involvement is indicated with how intensive and attracted they were in doing any activity. Mind mapping was able to motivate them exploring lesson more easily before they were forced to produce a writing. As writing was realized to be a very demanding, less interesting, and a bit stressing productive activity in an English lesson, being introduced with mind mapping and an initiating speaking activity through the lead-in activity seemed attracted and triggered their motivation to do follow the lesson. Writing lesson was found as boring as learning grammar explicitly, thus TBLT is not suitable for such English lesson like the English taught in Japan [1-4].

## IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, use of mind mapping in English lesson could achieve three main target; (1) learning effectiveness; (2) extending students' ideas; and (3) increase in students' engagement on the lesson. However, as the three-session class meeting was considered very limited in accordance with experiment group's achievement, a longer learning duration should certainly be on trial to see effectiveness of the mind mapping technic. In addition, number of research participants, research locus, data collecting method and tools should also be change to see its effectiveness.

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PAGE 1

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PAGE 2

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PAGE 3

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PAGE 4

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